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### Italian Foreign and Colonial Policy

MUSSOLINI'S vigorous pronouncements on international affairs, with their frequent reference to Italy's "glorious future," to her "legitimate colonial aspirations" and the new importance of her position in the councils of the great powers, have directed widespread attention to Italian foreign and colonial policy. Italy's treaty-making activities in the Balkans, culminating in the recent Tirana pact granting Italy a virtual protectorate over Albania, her attempt to secure a special position in Abyssinia, and her demand for participation in any future settlement of the problem of Tangier, have increased speculation outside of Italy as to the foreign policy of the Fascist régime.

Mussolini's success in arousing the enthusiasm of his followers in the boundless possibilities of the Italian nation has developed in Italy a feeling of national pride which has had its reverberations outside the Italian peninsula. While friends of Fascism point to Italy's enhanced prestige, fascist critics view with concern the growth of a nationalism which they hold must lead inevitably to international discord.

The materials out of which the Italian Premier has built his new nationalism were ready at hand when he came into power in 1922. The bitter resentment with which the majority of Italians viewed the territorial settlements at Versailles did not abate in the years which followed. Italy regarded as unfair and unjust the manner in which Great Britain and France had appropriated to themselves the former German colonies in Africa and divided the valuable territories of the Near East. Mussolini, by injecting a new vigor into the conduct of foreign affairs was able to win popular support for his policies. His participation in such important international conferences as Locarno, and his achievements in the Balkans have given Italy an added importance in European affairs particularly gratifying to her national pride.

But Mussolini's energy is not the only force in shaping Italian policy. His eloquence obscures but does not hide the important fact that fascist policy is motivated by essentially the same factors as pre-fascist policy, and that the spheres of present

day Italian interest are practically identical with those of pre-fascist days.

The purpose of this report is to analyze objectively the basic factors which determine Italian foreign policy and to review briefly Italy's political activity in recent years. It is obviously impossible, however, to touch upon the underlying motives which may or may not influence specific diplomatic departures or policies within the limited space of this report. As a result political events and trends are cited without any apology for their character or any final judgment of their significance with respect to the larger question of world peace.

#### BASIC FACTORS SHAPING ITALIAN POLICY

Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century Italy's foreign and colonial policy has been determined largely by her situation in the Mediterranean, by her unfavorable economic position and by her emigration requirements. Her shortage of essential raw materials and fuels, as well as her dependence upon imported foodstuffs for domestic consumption on the one hand, and the problem of disposing of her large surplus population on the other, have been the two basic economic factors influencing her external policy.

A survey of Italy's position with regard to raw materials shows more specifically that she lacks within her own borders practically every mineral essential to her economic development. She has neither iron nor copper, gold nor tin. Mercury and sulphur, the only two minerals which are now mined in Italy to any considerable extent, are relatively unimportant to her economic life. Equally critical is the shortage of fuels. Italy has no important coal deposits and no petroleum. For the former she is dependent upon England and Germany; for the latter upon England and Russia. Although the development of her hydroelectric resources may ultimately supply adequate power, that day is still far in the future.

In the matter of foodstuffs Italy likewise finds herself dependent upon foreign sources. In spite of intensive cultivation of every available acre of farm land and governmental stimulation of agricultural production by the creation of farm credits and the erection of a tariff on imported wheat, Italian production falls far short of meeting domestic needs. The following table shows the intensity of agricultural development in Italy. Only about 8 per cent of the total land area is classified as unproductive.

DISTRIBUTION OF ITALY'S LAND AREA*		
TYPES OF LAND	HECTARES	PERCENTAGE
Seed lands:		
Cereals .....	7,109,300	23.0
Temporary grass and other forage lands.....	2,135,300	6.9
Other arable and fallow.....	4,065,800	13.1
Meadows and permanent pastures.....	6,798,500	21.9
Horticulture .....	1,492,700	4.8
Forests (including chestnuts) .....	5,583,200	18.0
Productive non-cultivated lands .....	1,251,000	4.0
<hr/>		
Total agrarian and forest lands.....	28,435,800	91.7
Unproductive area .....	2,562,600	8.3
<hr/>		
Total .....	30,998,400	100.0

The fact that Italy's potential agricultural resources have been almost exhausted prevents a further material increase in production. While the production of grain in Italy has increased slightly during recent years, imports from abroad remain

large. Between 1921 and 1924 approximately 35 per cent of the country's total grain requirements were met by imports.

Italy's dependence upon foreign sources for fuel, essential foodstuffs and raw materials would be of little consequence economically if she had a large export

\*McGuire, Italy's International Economic Position, page 108.

trade. Up to the present time, however, Italy has had a consistent adverse balance of imports over exports and has only been able to approximate a balance of her international accounts through her income from invisible items, such as emigrant remittances, revenues from shipping services and foreign tourists. In the year 1924-25

Italy's adverse balance of trade was approximately 8,000,000,000 lire. In only one important group of commodities, textiles, cotton and silk fabrics, did exports exceed imports. The classified list of Italian imports and exports shows the extent and nature of Italy's adverse balance.

#### ITALY'S FOREIGN TRADE, 1925\*

(In millions of lire)

CLASSIFICATION	IMPORTS	EXPORTS
Textiles and their derivatives.....	6,586.1	8,358.2
Livestock, foodstuffs and tobacco.....	6,555.9	4,611.0
Metallic ores, metals, and their derivatives.....	3,915.9	1,405.3
Non-metallic ores, bricks, porcelains, glassware.....	2,223.8	541.5
Chemicals and pharmaceutical products and dyes.....	1,727.7	569.2
Seeds, oils, fats, vegetables, wax.....	1,175.6	409.2
Wood and manufactures of wood.....	1,120.5	219.0
Other merchandise .....	2,851.4	2,161.2
Total .....	26,156.9	18,274.6

Italy's dependence upon foreign countries for her raw materials and foodstuffs is of fundamental importance to her national security, as she would be at the mercy of any power able to maintain an effective blockade.

#### PRESSURE OF POPULATION IN ITALY

The second basic factor in determining Italian policy is the serious pressure of a large surplus population. During the past fifty years the population of Italy has risen steadily until it now exceeds forty-one million. The Italian emigration movement began in the decade of the seventies and increased steadily until 1914. In the period just before the war approximately four hundred thousand Italians emigrated from Italy each year, more than half going to the United States or South America.

After the war the unsettled political situation in Europe and the world-wide economic crisis acted as a check on Italian emigration. In 1924 the Immigration Act of the United States virtually closed America to Italian immigrants and diverted large numbers of Italians to France, where rehabilitation of the devastated areas had created a demand for labor. The present industrial depression in France, however,

is curtailing immigration. During the five years between 1919 and 1923 emigration was less than half what it was during the five year period before the war. From 1921 to 1925 the population of Italy increased at the rate of more than 400,000 per annum. At the present time neither Europe nor South America is absorbing this surplus population.

Italy's colonies in Africa and her possessions in the eastern Mediterranean likewise fail to provide an outlet. As shown by the following table, less than thirty thousand Italians have settled in the colonies.

	NATIVE POPULATION	ITALIAN POPULATION
Libya .....	775,000	24,560
Eritrea .....	392,157	3,901
Italian Somaliland ..	650,000	596
Dodecanese Isles .....	100,198	—

In fact, there are considerably more Italians in French Tunis and Algiers than there are in all of Italy's colonies together.

#### NATION'S REQUIREMENTS DETERMINING POLICY

Italy has sought to meet the particular needs arising from her shortage of raw materials and foodstuffs, her adverse balance of trade, and her large surplus population by way of colonial expansion and economic penetration. She has also devel-

\*McGuire, Italy's International Economic Position, page 493.

oped her political policy, which will be reviewed in a later section of this report, in harmony with these national requirements.

Italy was only partially successful in acquiring a colonial empire. All of her African possessions have been singularly unproductive either in providing opportunities for her emigrants or supplying her industries with raw materials. Mussolini has frequently referred to Italy's colonial needs and expressed his dissatisfaction with the colonial settlement made at Paris. Since the colonial question has not been reopened by the principal powers, Italy has had no opportunity to acquire new territories. Should the question of returning to Germany some of her former colonial possessions be made the subject of negotiation, however, Italy would undoubtedly come forward with her own claims.

Mussolini has not favored emigration as a permanent solution of Italy's population problem. "I am not an enthusiastic partisan of emigration," he declared before the Italian Senate on May 28, 1926. "It is a sad and sorrowful necessity which Italy can only accept. . . But after all, emigration is nothing but the pauperization of the people themselves. Only the strongest, the most daring and the most courageous emigrate." Recent legislation in Italy, encouraging larger families and establishing a tax on bachelors, has not been calculated to reduce the importance of the population problem.

#### EXPANSION OF FOREIGN TRADE

The immediate necessity of balancing her international accounts has led the Italian Government to take vigorous steps toward broadening her foreign markets. She has concluded commercial and political treaties with foreign powers, sought new fields for the export of her goods, constructed credit machinery, particularly in the Balkan States, and enlarged her mercantile marine.

During the post-war period, the distribution of Italy's foreign trade has undergone a marked change. Imports have come from fewer and fewer countries while Italian exports have been spread over new

markets. The United States, Great Britain, France and Germany, who supply Italy with the greater part of her raw materials, are still her principal customers, but since the war Italy has done much to extend her markets in the Balkans and the Near East. Yugoslavia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and Persia also have become important buyers of Italian goods. The present distribution of Italian trade by countries is given in the following table:

ITALY'S PRINCIPAL TRADE RELATIONS, 1925\*

COUNTRY	EXPORTS TO ITALY	IMPORTS FROM ITALY
	ITALY	ITALY
United States.....	6,174.8	1,887.8
Great Britain .....	2,722.6	1,855.0
France .....	2,349.4	2,019.5
Germany .....	2,251.3	2,027.0
British India .....	1,729.1	334.6
Argentina .....	1,370.0	1,145.4
Serb-Croat-Slovene State .....	781.0	496.5
Austria .....	659.0	666.1
Switzerland .....	521.7	1,634.4
Szechoslovakia .....	465.9	171.5

Italy has been particularly active in extending her foreign trade in the Balkans. In May, 1926, a loan of 200,000,000 lire, a large part of which was to be expended in Italy, was granted by a syndicate of Italian banks to the Government of Rumania. Italy has also acquired extensive economic interests in Bulgaria, where the Banca Commerciale Italiana e Bulgara is the country's most important institution, and in Albania where a large amount of Italian capital has been invested in developing the country and the National Bank is virtually controlled by Italian interests.

#### GROWTH OF MERCHANT MARINE

The rapid development of Italy's mercantile marine has been an important factor in her program of commercial expansion, and has opened new fields for overseas trade. The gross tonnage of the merchant marine has increased from approximately 1,950,000 tons in 1914 to 3,150,000 tons in 1925. Italian shipping has extended its services from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to North and South America, Australia and the Far East, and has aroused widespread interest in maritime policy. The Italian Government has taken a direct interest in

\*McGuire, Italy's International Economic Position, page 494.



building up this large commercial fleet and has subsidized ocean services with her colonies. Italy's present construction program is second only to that of Great Britain.

This rapid growth of the merchant marine and Italy's ultimate dependence on sea power for national security are important factors in determining Italian naval policy. Italy's naval building program fell under the restrictive agreement of the Washington Disarmament Conference, which placed her capital ship tonnage on a parity with that of France. In subsidiary craft not covered by the Washington Treaty, Italy's construction program was materially extended in 1925, when work was begun on two ten-thousand ton cruisers, eight 1,355-ton destroyers, and twelve submarines.

The recent invitation forwarded by President Coolidge to the Italian Government, inviting it to participate in a further disarmament conference covering subsidiary vessels, was rejected by Mussolini following the rejection of France. Italy's reply to the United States Government stated in part that "The Italian Government believes it can invoke in its favor those same geographic reasons to which reference is made in President Coolidge's message. If the United States on account of their favorable geographic position ('our favorable geographic position') have been able to reduce to a minimum their land armaments, Italy on account of her unfavorable geographic position, cannot expose herself without grave danger to any restriction of her naval armaments, which are already insufficient for her defense."

### PRINCIPAL SPHERES OF ITALIAN INTEREST

A brief survey of the principal spheres of Italian interest is essential to an understanding of Italy's specific relations with her European neighbors and her policy in the several fields of colonial activity. In general, these spheres are substantially the same today as they were before the advent of Fascism. For purposes of clarity it is convenient to make an arbitrary division under five separate heads: The northern frontier, the Adriatic, the Near East, eastern and northern Africa.

In the northern sphere Italy's primary interest is security. The natural protection afforded by the Alpine range which surrounds the plains of Lombardy has been supplemented by Mussolini in a series of political treaties.

In the Adriatic, Italy has endeavored to maintain and strengthen the position of dominance she gained by the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the war. This policy is supplemented by the demand of an open door for economic intercourse with the Balkan States.

Italy's failure to realize her territorial ambitions in the Near East following the war has given political as well as economic importance to her policy in this sphere. Her retention of the Dodecanese Islands

and Rhodes, acquired before the war, gives Italy a substantial interest in the future development of Asia Minor.

In eastern Africa Italian policy has been directed toward securing exclusive economic interests in Abyssinia, which is adjacent to the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland.

Italy's interests in northern Africa center in Libya, her largest colonial possession. They extend beyond the limits of this colony, however, and come in contact with French interests in Tunis, where over 60 per cent of the white population is Italian, and with British, French and Spanish interests in the international zone of Tangier, opposite Gibraltar.

#### THE NORTHERN SPHERE

Never in recent times has Italy allowed herself to be manoeuvred into a position where she has been faced by enemies both on her northeast and her northwest frontier. Her historic alliance with France balanced her old antagonism to Austria. Later, her membership in the Triple Alliance offset her coolness toward France. Since the war Italy has taken steps toward further safeguarding her northern frontier. Before the Fascists came into power Italy

had secured the strategic passes of Trentino from Austria by the Treaty of St. Germain. Mussolini concluded treaties for peaceful settlement of disputes with Switzerland and with Germany, whose

southern frontier lies only fifty miles north of the Italian border, as well as a treaty of neutrality with Yugoslavia. Italy's post-war treaty relations with her northern neighbors may be tabulated as follows:

Country	Date	Type of Treaty
France		No general post-war treaty
Switzerland	September 20, 1924	Treaty of conciliation and arbitration of all disputes.
Austria		No general post-war treaty since St. Germain by which Austria ceded Tyrol.
Germany	December 29, 1926	Treaty of conciliation and arbitration of all disputes.
Yugoslavia	January 27, 1924	Treaty of neutrality and cordial collaboration in case of unprovoked attack.

The Locarno treaties of December 11, 1925, signed by Italy, guarantee the inviolability of the German-Belgian and German-French frontiers.

These treaties, in guaranteeing the security of the northern frontier, have left Italy free to turn her attention to other spheres where she may hope to satisfy her colonial aspirations.

Italy's relations with France are more complex than her relations with her other northern neighbors because of the many and varied fields outside of Europe in which French and Italian interests come into contact. Relations between the two powers will be treated more fully in a later section of this report, after reviewing Italian interests in the Adriatic, the Near East and eastern and northern Africa. It is important to note in passing, however, that Italy's frontier in the northern sphere is adjacent to that of France for over 250 miles and that more than 800,000 Italian emigrants have crossed the border to settle in southern France. The fact that France has been willing to receive these immigrants only on condition that she could assimilate them, while Italy has been anxious to retain her hold on their affections and their nationality, is a potential source of friction.

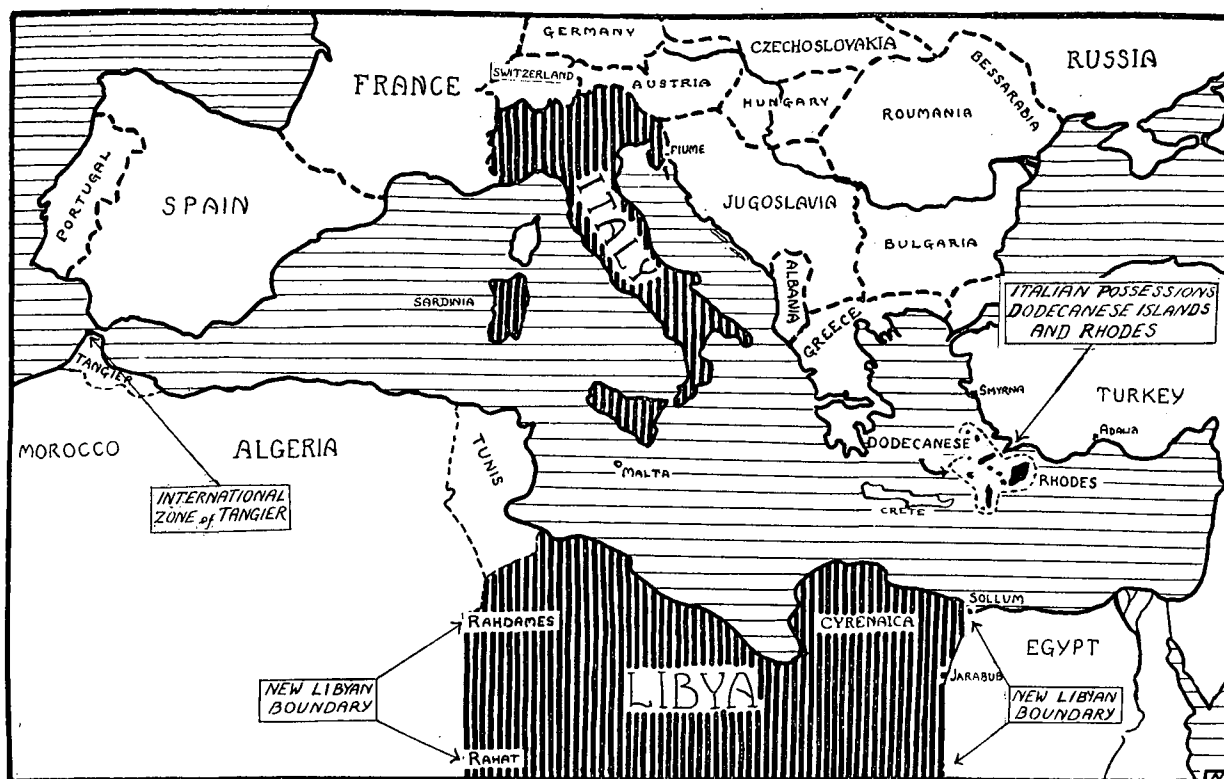
Italy's conciliation treaty with Germany, noted in the table above, has gone far toward restoring the cordial relations which were disturbed by Germany's protest against alleged ill treatment of German-

speaking minorities in the Italian Tyrol early in 1926.

The bellicose tone of Mussolini's utterances\* at the time of the Tyrol incident has been absent in subsequent dealings with Germany, and Germany's feelings have been partially conciliated by Italy's creation of the separate province of Bozen, the release of Tyrolese political prisoners and the reappearance of two German language newspapers. The action of the Italian Government in compensating German citizens for property confiscated during the war has been a further factor in restoring amicable relations.

Since the conclusion of the Italo-German treaty, Mussolini has been less outspoken in his opposition to Germany's colonial ambitions and the possibility of a future union of Austria and Germany. In fact, in an interview in the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, which was widely commented on in Paris, Mussolini declared that "The union of Austria and Germany is a problem more important to Germany than to Italy. It will probably come some day, although the formation of empires is a slow process." Concerning the future status of Austria the Italian Premier said "... a number of the people think that a hundred years from now most little states will have

\*See *Protection of Minorities in Europe*, Information Service, Vol. II., No. 9.



Prepared by the Foreign Policy Association.

### ITALIAN POSSESSIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

disappeared. In international politics and in international industry there is no longer a place for the little units." If this indicates a real change in Italian policy, it would be of paramount importance to Italy's relations with France as well as Germany, should the question of Austro-German union be raised.

#### THE ADRIATIC SPHERE

The principal of preponderance in the Adriatic has been a fundamental axiom of Italian policy ever since the passing of Austria-Hungary as a power on the west coast of the Balkan Peninsula. This principle was asserted as early as 1915, when Italy was negotiating with the Allies prior to her entry into the war. The strategic position of Albania at the gateway to the Adriatic was recognized as of primary importance to Italian security when in 1915, while she was still a neutral, Italy occupied the Albanian island of Sasseno and the Bay of Valona "for the effective preservation of Albanian neutrality," and for the purpose of preventing any other power from gaining a foothold in that

country. On joining the Allies Italy was promised extensive political and territorial advantages. Under the terms of the secret Treaty of London, signed in 1915, Italy was to get Trentino, Istria, Trieste, Dalmatia and the Adriatic islands in the Gulf of Valona.

While peace found Italy in actual possession of most of Albania, her ambitious plans for extending her influence in the Adriatic were rudely disturbed by the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, and by the unexpected resistance of Albanian nationalists. The promises of territory so freely advanced by the Allies before Italy entered the war were vigorously opposed by President Wilson at Versailles, and the final settlement, as it affected Italy's Adriatic ambitions, was regarded as little less than a humiliation by the vast majority of the Italian people. Popular resentment in Italy was given expression by Gabriele d'Annunzio, whose irregular troops occupied the Port of Fiume in 1919 in spite of governmental opposition, at the same time that Italian forces were compelled to evacuate Albania.

Italy obtained some measure of satisfac-

tion in the later settlement with Yugoslavia. Direct negotiations between the two countries resulted in the Treaty of Rapallo signed in November, 1920, which granted to Italy the peninsula of Istria, the adjacent island of Cherzo, and the island of Lagosta off the coast of Dalmatia. The port of Zara, situated about 100 miles south of Fiume, was annexed by Italy, while Fiume itself was given the status of a Free City. In the later treaty of 1924, between Yugoslavia and Italy, the latter obtained complete sovereignty over Fiume.

#### PENETRATION IN ALBANIA

Although Albania emerged from the peace settlement as an independent republic, largely as a result of President Wilson's support, Italy's special interest in the territorial integrity of the country was recognized in the following years. Under a decision of the Council of Ambassadors on November 9, 1921, the British, French, Italian and Japanese Governments, while recognizing the sovereignty and independence of Albania, declared that any modifications of her frontiers would be regarded by them as constituting "a danger for the strategic safety of Italy." For the time being Italy was unable to extend her political influence in Albania. Her predominance in Albanian economic and financial affairs, however, steadily increased, and culminated in a large loan to the Albanian government, the negotiation of a treaty of commerce and navigation and two other conventions in 1924. Italian assistance was instrumental in establishing the National Bank of Albania in 1925 which gave to Italy virtual control of Albanian finances.

Mussolini has been no less jealous than his predecessors in preserving Italian hegemony in the Adriatic. The temporary occupation of the Greek island of Corfu by Italian forces in 1924 was a spectacular example of Mussolini's Adriatic policy. The murder of several members of an Italian boundary commission by Greek bandits was the immediate cause of the seizure. Mussolini consented to withdraw his forces only upon receiving an official apology and an indemnity from the Greek government.



Prepared by the Foreign Policy Association.

#### POSSESSIONS IN THE ADRIATIC

In the summer of 1926 Italy again turned her attention to Albania. It is alleged that during June the Italian Minister to Tirana presented a demand to President Ahmed Bey Zogu that Albania formally recognize an Italian protectorate, in return for certain financial considerations. This plan was temporarily checked by the action of President Zogu, who informed the British, French and Yugoslav Legations of Italy's proposal. The Italian Foreign Office was forced to explain to Great Britain that its representative at Tirana had exceeded his instructions.

Within four months, however, the Treaty of Tirana, between Albania and Italy was an accomplished fact. The treaty was signed on November 27, 1926, during a minor revolution on the Albanian frontier, and guaranteed Albania's political, juridical and territorial *status quo* within the framework of "the treaties to which both parties are signatories, and of the Covenant of the League of Nations.\*

The signing of this treaty, which was regarded as virtually establishing an Italian

\*The text of the Treaty of Tirana is given in Annex I.



protectorate over Albania, let loose a flood of comment in Europe. The greatest resentment was voiced in Yugoslavia, where an acute cabinet crisis followed the announcement of the treaty's provisions. The Yugoslav press denounced the terms of the agreement and suggested the withdrawal of Italy's special trading privileges in Yugoslavia. The fact that Italy had apparently disregarded the provisions of the 1924 Italo-Yugoslav pact, which stipulated that the two states should consult together before making any treaty, created a particular resentment in Belgrade.

The Italian policy of preponderance in the Adriatic is supplemented by her demand for an open door for her economic intercourse with the Balkan States. Since the war Italy has entered into close political relations with each of the members of the Little Entente. Under Mussolini, who has given new impetus to this demand for equality of opportunity, treaties have been concluded with Yugoslavia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. The general character of the new Balkan treaties are presented in the following table:

Country	Date	Terms
Jugoslavia	January 27, 1924.	Treaty of collaboration and neutrality.
Rumania	September 16, 1926.	Treaty of collaboration and friendship.
Czechoslovakia	July 5, 1924.	Treaty of collaboration and friendship.
Albania	November 27, 1926.	Treaty guaranteeing Albanian political, territorial and juridical <i>status quo</i> .
Hungary		No general political treaty since Treaty of Trianon, 1920.
Greece		No general political treaty.
Bulgaria		No general political treaty since the Treaty of Neuilly, 1919.

These new treaties between Italy and the members of the Little Entente, while they do not provide the military assistance of a formal alliance, nevertheless involve a close diplomatic relationship. Following the creation of the Little Entente, France concluded treaties of alliance and friendship, first with Czechoslovakia, and later with both Rumania and Yugoslavia, thus giving her a direct political interest in the maintenance of stability in the Balkans. While the Italian treaties do not provide for military support, they bind Italy to give "together with its benevolent collaboration, its political and diplomatic support" in the event of external aggression against any member of the Little Entente. Thus Mussolini has acquired for Italy a position of political importance in the Balkans which rivals that of France. At the same time, however, Italy has begun negotiations with Hungary, against whom the Little Entente alliances were directed. The forthcoming

meeting between Mussolini and Count Bethlen in Rome is viewed with grave concern by Yugoslavia, whose apprehensions have already been roused by the Italian-Albanian pact.

#### THE NEAR EAST SPHERE

The history of Italy's relations with the Near East during the decade between 1910 and 1920 throws considerable light on her present Near Eastern policy. Although she had been slow to realize the importance of the economic and political concessions obtained from Turkey by the other European powers in the early years of the twentieth century, Italy gained a foothold off the coast of Anatolia when she secured the Dodecanese Islands and Rhodes following her victory over the Turks in the war of 1911-1912. With the acquisition of this territory, popular interest in the Near East was aroused among

the Italian people. Italian trade with Turkey increased rapidly and stimulated political interest and territorial ambitions.

As in the Adriatic, Italy was promised extensive territorial possessions in Anatolia, in the neighborhood of Smyrna and Adalia under the terms of two secret treaties included by the Allies in 1915 and 1917. Italian plans of expansion in the Near East, however, were curtailed at the Versailles Conference and completely destroyed by the onslaught of Turkish nationalism in 1922. At the time of the Lausanne Conference, which established peace in the Near East in 1923, Italy found herself without any new possessions in Anatolia.

With the exception of a few minor concessions in Anatolia and her possession of the Dodecanese Islands and Rhodes, Italy today has no important territorial interests in Turkey or the Near East and no mandates similar to those acquired by Great Britain in Irak and Palestine, and by France in Syria. During the past year it has been rumored that Italy desired to take over the French mandate in Syria, and that Mussolini was awaiting a favor-

able opportunity to acquire new territory from Turkey. These rumors have found support especially in Soviet circles where it is asserted that secret agreements between the Western powers have culminated in the granting to Italy of special compensations at the expense of Turkey in the event that any partition of Anatolia takes place. The fact that Turkey is not yet a member of the League of Nations and cannot therefore claim the protection of the League in case of unprovoked attack, has apparently strengthened this suspicion. Italian leaders, however, deny these rumors and insist that Italy's policy is pacific and opposed to any disturbance of the world's peace. The Turkish Ambassador at Rome, Suad Bey, made a statement in December, 1926, that the relations between the two countries are entirely cordial and that rumors of hostility have no foundation in fact.

Italy's trade in the Near East since the war has shown marked improvement, and through her enlarged mercantile marine she has obtained extensive interests in eastern Mediterranean and in Black Sea traffic.

### ITALY'S INTERESTS IN AFRICA

Mussolini's widely heralded trip to Libya in April, 1926, was a graphic example of his sustained efforts to popularize the colonial program of the fascist government. While it was intended primarily for home consumption, like many of his speeches on Italy's colonial policy, it nevertheless attracted wide attention abroad and gave rise to many rumors regarding Italian colonial designs.

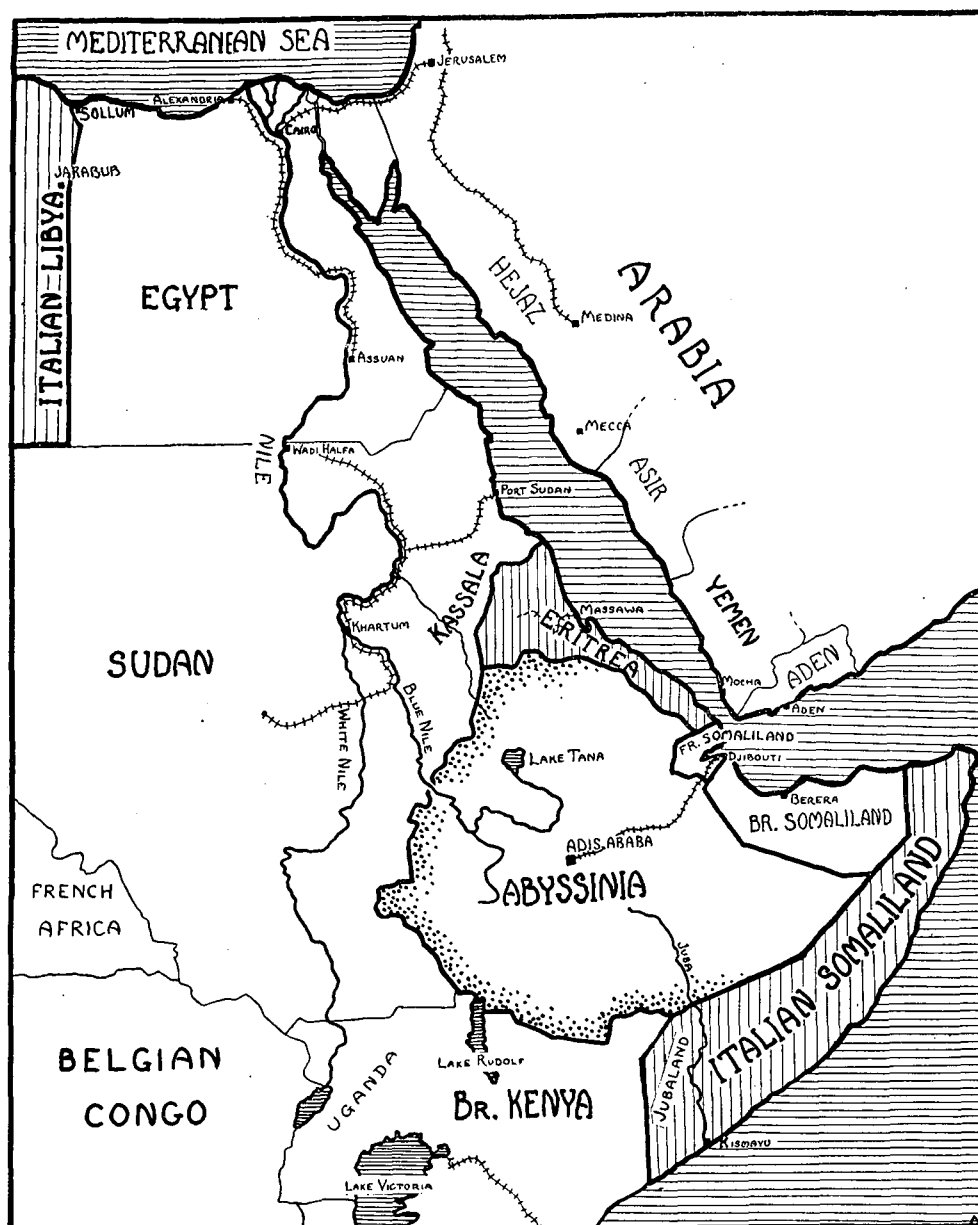
A survey of Italy's colonial development in Africa, however, reveals the fact that Mussolini's colonial policy does not differ greatly from that of former Italian governments. Italy was the last of the European nations to obtain colonial possessions in Africa and, coming late into the field, her acquisitions were neither as extensive in area nor as rich in resources as those of Great Britain and France.

Before entering the war Italy concluded a secret treaty with the Allies by which she

was assured territorial compensation in Africa in case of victory over the Central Powers. Article 13 of the secret Treaty of London provided "in the event of the extinction of the French and British colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany, France and Great Britain recognize in principle the right of Italy to demand for herself certain compensations in the form of an extension of her possessions in Eritrea, Somaliland, Libya and the colonial districts bordering on French and British colonies."

The semi-official colonial party, which was anxious to make Italy one of the great colonial powers in Africa, went even further in defining Italian objectives in Africa at its congress in Naples in 1917. The following claims were put forth:

1. The guarantee to Italy of an exclusive interest in Abyssinia.
2. Annexation of Kassala to Eritrea.



*Prepared by the Foreign Policy Association.*

### ITALY'S POSSESSIONS IN EAST AFRICA

3. The guarantee of economic relations between Eritrea and the opposite coast of the Red Sea.
4. The annexation of Jubaland to Somaliland.
5. The annexation of British and French Somaliland.
6. The annexation of the hinterland of Libya with particular reference to the Jarabub Oasis and the route of communication between Rahat and Rahdames in the Sahara Desert.

Few of these ambitions were satisfied at the Versailles Conference, and the claims

put forward by Italy with respect to British and French Somaliland and Abyssinia were rejected outright. The committee dealing with the question of Italian expansion in Africa, under Lord Milner, would only agree to revise both the eastern and western frontiers of Libya and to cede the Valley of the Juba River to Italian Somaliland.

When the territorial acquisitions of Great Britain and France were made public in Italy, popular dissatisfaction was freely expressed. It was pointed out that the other Allies had secured a disproportionate share of the former German colonies in

Africa. Whereas Great Britain and South Africa had secured approximately 740,000 square miles in the form of mandates over the former German colonies, and France had secured 188,000 square miles, Italy had received nothing from the mandate settlements. Her only compensations in Africa were Jubaland, ceded by Great Britain, and the hinterland of Libya, ceded by France and Egypt, which together have a total area of less than 50,000 square miles.

This dissatisfaction over the distribution of the former German colonies has given point to Mussolini's frequent references to Italy's "legitimate colonial aspirations."

#### THE EAST AFRICAN SPHERE

Italy's colonies in eastern Africa consist of Eritrea and Somaliland, the first lying between Abyssinia and the Red Sea, and the second to the south of Abyssinia on the Arabian Sea.

Neither of these colonies has provided a useful source of raw materials for Italian industries nor a profitable market for Italian goods. Italy's trade with her east African possessions is negligible. While their economic development is not impossible, it is impractical for the time being because of the great expense involved in exploiting such natural resources as exist. Furthermore a tropical climate unsuitable for white colonization has restricted Italian emigration. The total number of Italians in eastern Africa does not exceed 10,000 at the present time. The chief importance of Eritrea and Somaliland lies in their proximity to Abyssinia.

The interior of Abyssinia, in contradistinction to the Italian possessions on its borders, has a climate more suitable for white colonization and possesses greater potential wealth. Italy's policy with reference to Abyssinia has swung from one of military intervention, which characterized her policy in the latter part of the nineteenth century, to one of economic penetration.

The Tri-Partite Treaty of 1906, signed by Great Britain, France and Italy, guaranteed the territorial and political *status quo* of Abyssinia, but recognized the special interests of the three powers in their respective spheres. The treaty sanctioned

Italy's interest in western Abyssinia, Great Britain's special interest in controlling the head waters of the Blue Nile, and France's special interest in the new railroad between Bjibuti and Adis Ababa.

The conclusion in 1926 of an agreement between Great Britain and Italy defining their respective interests in Abyssinia marks the most recent development of Italy's policy of economic penetration in the sphere granted to her by the Tri-Partite Treaty of 1906. Abyssinia, who became a member of the League of Nations in 1923, formally protested to the League Secretariat, declaring that her national sovereignty was endangered by the Italo-British agreement.

The gist of the agreement was that Great Britain was to be free to construct a dam at Lake Tana and to control the head waters of the Blue Nile. Italy, on the other hand, was to obtain an "exclusive economic influence" in western Abyssinia and the right to construct a railroad between Eritrea and Italian Somaliland across Abyssinian territory.

The original proposals for an agreement were made by Italy in 1919, and were rejected by Great Britain. In December, 1925, however, Sir R. Graham, the British Ambassador in Rome, approached Mussolini with a proposal to renew negotiations on the basis proposed by Italy in 1919. The agreement was concluded in June, 1926, and immediately submitted to Abyssinia. In the face of the latter's protest both governments denied that they had any intention of exerting pressure upon her and the incident was settled privately before it became a subject of debate before the Council of the League of Nations. The Italo-British agreement, however, has not been abrogated.

#### ECONOMIC PENETRATION IN ARABIA

Italian interests on the African mainland were recently extended across the Red Sea into the Arabian Kingdom of Yemen. Immediately following the failure of Sir Gilbert Clayton to negotiate an agreement with Imam Yahia, ruler of the Yemen, the latter signed a commercial treaty with Italy granting her a dominant interest in the



foreign trade of his country. While this treaty does not grant Italy a protectorate over the Yemen, (under Article I the government of Italy specifically recognizes the full and absolute independence of the Yemen and its sovereign), it gives her important commercial privileges. In view of the interest acquired by Italy on the Arabian mainland Great Britain took steps to limit Italian aspirations in this new region by removing all possibility of misunderstanding which might have been provoked by the activities of Italian diplomacy in direct negotiations. At a recent conference in Rome between Britain and Italy both parties agreed to do nothing to disturb the present *status quo* in southern Arabia.

#### THE NORTH AFRICAN SPHERE

Italy has both colonial and political interests in northern Africa. The large colony of Libya, lying on the coast of North Africa between Egypt and Tunis, was acquired by Italy in 1912, in the war with Turkey. While its area is over three times that of the Italian Kingdom, this vast African colony supports a population of only 800,000 of which less than 25,000 are Italians. Except for a narrow belt along the Mediterranean and a few scattered oases, the colony does not present a promising field of economic development. To the natural inclemency of the desert there is added the difficulty of maintaining order among the wild native tribes, particularly the Senussi. Over half the total revenue of the colony is devoted to military expenditures and it is expected that a large military force will have to be maintained in the colony for many years to come.

Libya's present eastern and western boundaries were determined after the war by two treaties negotiated with France and Great Britain. France ceded to Italy all territory lying to the east of a line running from Rahdames to Rahat. The British Government agreed likewise to cede to Italy the oasis of Jarabub, which had previously been under Egyptian rule. The final annexation by Italy of the oasis of Jarabub, however, did not take place until the end of 1925, due to the resistance of the

Egyptian government, which having assumed control of foreign relations following the termination of the British protectorate over Egypt, refused to cede the territory to Italy. An agreement was arrived at eventually by compromise through the cession to Egypt, in compensation for Jarabub, for the territory immediately surrounding the Port of Sollum on the Mediterranean coast.

Italo-French rivalry in northern Africa dates back to the conquest of Tunis in 1881 by France, which aroused the keenest indignation in Italy, and led to the downfall of the Francophile ministry of Cairoli. This feeling has persisted to the present in spite of the subsequent acquisition of Libya by Italy. There is a striking contrast between Italian Libya and the adjoining French colonies of Tunis and Algeria. The more favorable economic opportunities offered in the French colonies have attracted large numbers of Italian immigrants to Tunis and Algeria, while a relatively small number have emigrated to Libya. The Italian population of the French colonies outnumbers the French population and has led to French legislation affecting naturalization of Italians which has been a cause of some friction between the two governments.

#### ITALO-SPANISH RELATIONS AND TANGIER

Another point along the North African coast to which particular importance is ascribed by Italy is the international zone of Tangier. Premier Mussolini has announced recently Italy's desire to secure an equal voice with the other powers in the regulation of the international zone. As a party to the original Tangier Convention of 1911 Italy feels she has a claim to be included in any future conference regarding this question.\*

Italo-Spanish cooperation in questions affecting the Western Mediterranean was illustrated by the conclusion on August 7, 1926, of a treaty of conciliation and neutrality between Spain and Italy. General Primo de Rivera, the Spanish dictator, following the signing of the treaty, declared

\*Full exposition of the Tangier question may be found in the F. P. A. Information Service, Vol. II, No. 15, *The International Problem of Tangier*.

his conviction that the city of Tangier should be transferred to Spanish control. On August 25, a formal note was forwarded by the Spanish Government to the governments of Great Britain, France and Italy and other signatories of the Act of Algeciras proposing that the Moroccan question be reopened. Both the French and the British Governments expressed themselves unwilling to call a general conference at that time, but Premier Mussolini on August 28 accepted Spain's suggestion, demanding, however, that Italy should be represented in the future conference and promising Italy's influence to conciliate the opposing interests of the powers and her cooperation to secure a solution favorable to Spain's demands. After further correspondence and discussion, the matter was adjourned until February 7, 1927, when Spain's claim for a revision of the existing status in Tangier was discussed between French and Spanish experts at Paris as preliminary to what may be a larger conference. Great Britain and Italy will come into the discussion only in case Spain and France are unable to reach an agreement.

The apparent object of Mussolini in supporting Spain in the question of Tangier is his desire to secure for Italy a degree of authority in the Tangier zone equal to that of Great Britain, or even to that of Spain and France. But it has been asserted in some quarters that Italy's interest is more far reaching and that she is preparing for the revision of the whole African question, involving the redistribution of African mandates, the purchase of Portuguese colonies or to demand direct cessions of territory in her favor.

#### RELATIONS WITH THE LEAGUE

In addition to Italy's special spheres of interest, some reference should be made to her relations with the League of Nations and with France and Great Britain.

In contrast to the Liberal government which Fascism displaced, the present régime in Italy apparently places more reliance upon its own initiative and force than it does on the good offices of the League of Nations. While Mussolini's government

has taken an active part in the work of the Council and has cooperated in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference and other committees, it has not depended upon the ability of the League to help Italy in solving her economic, strategic and demographic problems.

#### ITALY'S CONTACTS WITH FRANCE

Franco-Italian relations owe their complexity to the many political and economic contacts between the two powers. Differences between France and Italy were not absent in their pre-war relations, but they became more acute at the Peace Conference when France failed to support Italy in what she considered her just share of the territorial settlements in Africa and the Near East.

French and Italian interests have converged in the Balkans as a result of Italy's new treaties with the members of the Little Entente—Jugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Rumania—with whom France had established the closest diplomatic ties. Italy's treaties with Spain and Albania have also touched on matters of prime interest to France.

In northern Africa, Franco-Italian relations have been disturbed by questions affecting the nationality of Italian settlers in the French colony of Tunis. France's aim of absorbing these Italian immigrants, numbering approximately 100,000, has been opposed by Italy on the basis of the convention of 1896, which gave Italians in Tunis the right to retain their nationality. The World Court having decided in 1923 that the French nationality decrees of 1921 were not solely a matter of domestic jurisdiction, France has continued to renew the convention at three months intervals up to the present time.

The large number of Italians living in France is responsible for the tension between the two powers during the past year. In November Mussolini, following the attempt upon his life, called upon France to cease extending her protection to anti-fascist refugees. "It is time," he declared, "we finished with certain culpable and un-

heard of tolerance beyond the frontiers if there is real desire to have friendship with the Italian people." This controversy over Italian political exiles was brought to an end following the disclosures surrounding the arrest in France of Ricciotti Garibaldi.

The possibility of a personal meeting between Mussolini and Foreign Minister Briand of France, similar in character to the Franco-German conversations at Thoiry, and the Italo-British meeting at Leghorn, has been frequently proposed during recent months. To date, however, no such meeting has been officially announced.

#### ANGLO-ITALIAN RELATIONS

There are more grounds for common understanding between Italy and Great Britain than between Italy and France. Fundamentally, Italy is dependent upon British good-will as the chief naval power in the Mediterranean, which she controls by her strategic outpost at Gibraltar, the Suez Canal and the Island of Malta. In all the spheres in which their interests come into contact, Great Britain and Italy have gone far towards reaching a mutually satisfactory understanding. Reference has already been made to the agreement existing between the two powers in regard to Abyssinia, and to the removal of misunderstanding between them in Arabia.

The recent meetings between Mussolini, Sir Austen Chamberlain and Winston Churchill have created the impression in some quarters that there is an agreement between Great Britain and Italy on general questions of policy. No specific proof of such agreement, however, can be found beyond the approval alleged to have been given by the British government to Mussolini's recent policy in Albania, officially denied by Downing Street, and the fact that Premier Mussolini has accepted and endorsed all points of British Far-Eastern policy.

The friendship existing between England and Italy was expressed by Mussolini in an interview granted to a newspaper correspondent last December:

"Even if there were not many economic and political reasons in favor of collaboration, the friendship would exist just the same, because of the tradition which has never been broken from the time of Piedmont until today and which will never be betrayed. The two nations, moreover, follow the same political tendencies, which are based on these principles: Maintenance of equilibrium in the basin of the Mediterranean and development of commerce and trade for the increased prosperity of the two peoples. The signatures of the two nations on the Locarno compact show, moreover, that both are ready to make sacrifices for the maintenance of peace."

### ANNEX I

#### TEXT OF THE ITALO-ALBANIAN TREATY OF TIRANA, NOVEMBER 27, 1926.

Italy and Albania, with a view to re-enforcing their mutual relations of friendship and security in regard to their geographical position and with a view to contributing to the consolidation of peace, animated by the desire to maintain the political, juridical, and territorial *status quo* of Albania within the framework of the treaties to which both parties are signatories and of the Covenant of the League of Nations, have decided to conclude the present pact of friendship and security and for the purpose have designated as their plenipotentiaries the following. . .

##### ARTICLE I

Italy and Albania recognize that any disturbance directed against the political, juridical, and territorial *status quo* of Albania is opposed to their reciprocal political interest.

##### ARTICLE II

To safeguard the above-mentioned interest, the High Contracting Parties undertake to give their mutual support and cordial collaboration; they likewise undertake not to conclude with other Powers political or military agreements prejudicial to the interests of the other Party as defined in the present pact.

##### ARTICLE III

The High Contracting Parties undertake to submit to a special procedure of conciliation and of arbitration questions which may arise between them and which can not be settled through regular diplomatic channels.

The conditions of this procedure of peaceful settlement will be the object of a special convention to be concluded as soon as possible.

## ARTICLE IV

The present pact shall remain in force for five years, and may be denounced or renewed one year before the expiry.

## ARTICLE V

The present pact shall be ratified and afterwards

registered with the League of Nations. The ratification shall be exchanged at Rome.

Done at Tirana, November 27, 1926.

Signed:

POMPEO ALOISI.

H. VRIONI.

## ANNEX II

## TEXT OF THE ITALIAN-RUMANIAN TREATY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1926.

## ARTICLE I

The High Contracting Parties mutually agree to give each other mutual support and cordial co-operation in order to maintain the international order and to assure the fulfilment of the obligations stipulated in the treaties signed by them.

## ARTICLE II

In the event of international complications, and, should the High Contracting Parties mutually agree that their mutual interests are or are likely to be endangered, they bind themselves to consult each other as to the proper measures to be taken in common to defend said interests.

## ARTICLE III

In the event of the security or the interests of one of the High Contracting Parties being threatened as a result of violent incursions from the outside, the other party binds itself to give, together with its benevolent collaboration, its political and diplomatic support, with the object of contributing to the removal of the external cause of this threat.

## ARTICLE IV

The High Contracting Parties bind themselves to submit to a procedure of conciliation or of arbitration the controversies which might arise between them or those which may not be able to be settled by ordinary diplomatic means. This procedure of peaceful settlement shall form the object of a special convention which will be concluded with the shortest possible delay.

## ARTICLE V

The present treaty shall remain in force five years and can be cancelled or renewed one year before its expiration.

## ARTICLE VI

The present treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Rome. It will enter into force immediately after the ratifications have been exchanged.

Upon the occasion of the signing of the treaty the following letters were exchanged:

Letter from Signor Benito Mussolini to General Averescu.

Rome, September 17, 1926.

Dear Mr. President:—

In the course of the conversations relative to the treaty of friendship and arbitration between Italy and Rumania, we have had occasion to examine also the question of the treaty concerning Bessarabia, signed at Paris, on October 28th, 1920. For the reasons which I have had the honor to submit to you, no mention is made in the pact of the above-mentioned treaty, the ratification of which, on the part of the Italian Government, will only take place when this can be done without prejudicing the general interests of Italy.

Accept, etc. . .

Letter from General Averescu to Signor Benito Mussolini.

Dear Mr. Minister:—

I hasten to acknowledge receipt of your letter under date of today in which Your Excellency kindly refers to our conversations relative to the treaty of friendship and arbitration between Rumania and Italy and confirms to me the reasons for which no mention has been made in said treaty of the treaty concerning Bessarabia.\* Under these conditions, I note that the ratification, on the part of Italy, of the above-mentioned treaty is a question of time and opportunity.

Accept, etc. . .

\*It was announced on March 8, 1927 that Italy had ratified the Treaty of Paris of October 28, 1920, recognizing the union of Bessarabia with Rumania. Great Britain ratified this treaty in 1922 and France in 1924. Italy's ratification brings the treaty into effect and gives legal sanction to Rumania's possession of Bessarabia.

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